

California State Journal of Medicine.

OWNED AND PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE
Medical Society of the State of California

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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VOL. IV

MARCH, 1906.

No. 3

NOTICE.

The State Society meets in San Francisco April 17th, 18th and 19th. This will be the Semi-Centennial year and the meeting will be an unusually good one.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The prospect of securing special rates to the next meeting of the A. M. A., which will be held at Boston, June 5th to 8th, seems to be very good indeed at the time of writing. Pacific Coast physicians have for years been the only members of the profession in the United States who had to pay full fare every year in going to these meetings. The Trans-Continental Passenger Association, the body which fixes these things, recently met in Chicago and fixed up rates for the summer meetings. There is to be a meeting of the Knights of Columbus at New Haven June 3rd to 9th and tickets at the special rate fixed will be on sale in this state May 25th, 26th and 27th; the going time is limited to June 9th, and the final return limited to August 31st. From this state tickets "will be sold to Eastern terminals only," and the rate fixed is one thirty-day first-class fare to Chicago and return, plus the rate fixed by Eastern connections. At the time of writing the secretary of the State Society is trying to arrange so that purchasers of these tickets who attend the A. M. A. meeting in Boston may have their return tickets validated in Boston and not be compelled to go to New Haven for that

purpose. The prospect of securing this concession seems good, but even if it cannot be arranged, the one-fare rate, plus the local fare from Boston to New Haven, will be very much less than the regular rates which heretofore we have been compelled to pay. It is to be hoped that a large number of our physicians will take advantage of this opportunity to attend what will undoubtedly be the biggest meeting the Association has ever held.

The present is an exceedingly interesting period in medical development in this country. The last three or four generations of the last century saw the growth of many medical schools and the output of many physicians. It is safe to say that over half the "schools" were quite unnecessary and as large a proportion of their output were so poorly educated as to have little if any real claim to the title of doctor of medicine. There was nothing to prevent the "diploma mill" from flourishing and nothing to require adherence to any standard on the part of any medical school. A few years ago it was estimated that about half the physicians in this country made no effort to keep up with medical progress by reading current medical literature. But all this is changing. With the advent of the medical practice laws requiring an examination, came a fatal illness to "diploma mills" and private medical schools which did not or could not give a satisfactory medical education. The privately owned and "published-for-profit" medical journal and the nostrum maker appeal not to the intelligent, but to the ignorant, and they, too, are afflicted with the same illness which is causing the timely death of the "diploma mill." All over the country medical organizations are awaking to the fact that it is highly desirable to own and control their own medical publications, and thus have a medium for intercommunication and for publishing the truth. Who, for instance, would look to the *New York Medical Journal*, with its expressed leaning toward the nostrum maker, or the *Medical Record*, with quite as acute a leaning in the same direction, and a dignity which will not permit its editorial pages to know that its advertising pages exist, who would expect either of these journals to discuss in plain words and with unbiased judgment the evils of the nostrum business as they affect the medical profession? Who would expect any of the host of small, privately owned "medical" journals throughout the country, many of them owned and edited by ignorant men and intended to be read by other and quite as ignorant subscribers, to print the truth about the frauds and worthless nostrums which subsidize them? Thus the state journals have come to stay. The day of the uneducated physician is gone, and the day of nostrum-supported and "published-for-profit" medical journals is almost at its end. Some farsighted advertisers have recognized this fact

and are securing preferred space in state journals on long-term contracts; others will presently awake to the fact that the combined circulation of the state journals offers unquestionably the very best advertising medium and that the expenditure of additional money is merely waste—unless it is “hush money.”

The whole medical profession of this country is just waking up to the fact that it has been slumbering and dreaming for many, many years. But already signs of a new activity are in evidence in many portions of our country. In many communities the best physicians will not make insurance examinations for less than \$5. They are discussing the lodge practice evil and coming to realize the insult to professional intelligence in proffering a pittance for wholesale professional services. Most physicians who are not either moribund or densely ignorant are beginning to ask “impertinent” questions about the composition of the all too numerous “secret proprietary” medicines offered to them by glib-tongued “detail men.” Occasionally we hear a protest against the gratuitous educational remarks of some boorish drummer who undertakes to tell physicians all about the special and particular virtues and advantages of the nostrum manufactured by his particular “house.” Most of the state journals are very much awake and are working hard to try and wake the slumbering members of the profession; but, unfortunately, some are either asleep or, to judge from their advertising pages, are to be classed with the predatory privately owned journals. Doubtless the respectable element in these particular associations will prevail in time and these few state journals will then cleanse themselves and “be good.”

The present stirring up in the nostrum business is resulting in some very curious situations.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* has published a bill, ideal in its construction, requiring the formula to be printed on the label of all packages of medicine containing alcohol or habit-forming drugs, and the bill has been introduced into the legislatures of several states. It is certainly to be hoped that the influence of Mr. Bok's publication, together with that of the medical profession, may be enough to secure the passage of the proposed law; but the druggists, almost to a man, are fighting it. Probably the National Association of Retail Druggists will attack this proposed legislation wherever it is introduced, and may even impertinently attempt to secure legislation detrimental to any existing medical practice act, as it did in California last January. The proposed law, like all medical practice laws, is for the protection of the public; the medical is an altruistic profession, and every right-thinking physician is heartily in favor of such legislation as makes for

the protection of the people. The druggists, apparently, have no thought for the public welfare, but would rather not see a law which would interfere with the sale of habit-producing nostrums. Their N. A. R. D. is fighting the attempt to secure decency and honesty and is aligning itself with the Proprietary Association of America; indeed, it has been rumored that the N. A. R. D. is very much under the influence of the P. A. A. At the same time the druggists all over the country are clamoring for a closer and more cordial relation with the medical profession. Can they expect this to come about if, through their own association, they oppose the very fundamental principles on which medicine is built and for which physicians devote their lives? Is their desire to participate in the criminal profits derived from the sale of habit-producing nostrums greater than their desire to assume more friendly relations with the medical profession? It certainly would seem so. Possibly this may have some bearing upon the rapid growth of the practice of self-dispensing, a practice made more easy and reliable by the rapid development of active principle therapy.

Two publications reached the JOURNAL office about the same time. One is the *New Idea*, published by the manufacturing house of Frederick Stearns & Co., and avowedly intended for the purpose of presenting statements about articles of its own manufacture to druggists. It is a “house organ.” The other is the *Western Druggist*, supposedly a pharmaceutical publication intended for pharmacists and druggists. Referring to some proposed bills, drawn up at a conference at which the Proprietary Association of America was well represented, which it is alleged will control the sale of dangerous nostrums, it says:

“Both the drafts have their origin primarily, not so much perhaps in the desire of the drug trade for restrictive legislation relating to sales of narcotics and of proprietaries containing alcohol as in the demand of the general public for the abolition of the sale of death-dealing narcotics and of venomous whiskies masquerading as medicines. The public wrath against this class of ‘remedies’ has reached the boiling point, and not without abundant reason.”

Yet on another page of the same issue, referring to one of the articles in *Collier's*, which showed up the fraudulent nature of the nostrum crime and which, more than anything else, brought about that public “wrath,” and the *Western Druggist* has stated, “with abundant reason,” it speaks of the “utter unfairness and reckless mendacity which characterizes the treatment of this subject by the *Collier* writer.” Wouldn't that inconsistency jar you? By contrast, the tone of the *New Idea* is refreshingly different. Mind you, it is only a “house” publication, and one would suppose it would be chary of taking sides; yet it warmly and vigorously supports the fight against nostrums of this criminal class, and highly commends *Collier's Weekly* and the *Ladies' Home*